

ITEM 14 NOTICE OF MOTION - COUNCILLOR RYAN MORRIS - MAINTAINING ENERGY STABILITY AND COMPETITION

Councillor Ryan Morris has submitted the following Notice of Motion –

“I formally move that Council ceases work to incorporate a ban on gas in any developments for a period of 10 years via the DCP Chapter A2 or any methods.”

Background provided by Councillor Ryan Morris:

Current market share of appliances that have a gas or electric option show 65% of appliances sold are gas operated. Our residents should be allowed to have free choice of how they setup their homes. By implementing a ban on gas when the technology and societal want for it is not there, is overreach.

The time spent by council staff on trying to find a way to ban a stable load energy delivery method is costing rates payers money. Especially when any developer can go to State planning and get approvals for gas in their developments as it is not banned by the State or Federal authorities. Not to mention that gas fields licences have just been granted until 2070 after the most recent federal elections, ensuring gas production for generations.

Additionally, Council having resolved to asking the current Minister for Planning to clarify the State governments stance on gas received his reply which included – “Inserting a compulsory standardised aim for ESD and related matters would not significantly increase a council’s influence or responsibility given the Act’s existing requirements.” He continued, “...it would be a significant and onerous task to draft a legally acceptable definition that would be accepted...”.

We have a responsibility to ESD, however, dictating bans is not in line with ESD attitudes. Lowering costs is ideal but what one person can afford over another is an individual choice and circumstance and should not be dictated to by government.

When electrical companies currently turn off individuals solar during hot days in summer because it is overloading the system, the people who have spent tens of thousands of dollars for self-producing energy end up paying more because the infrastructure is not there to support the current uptake, and they must buy their energy back to relieve pressure on the grid’s storage facilities. Banning gas will only exacerbate this problem.

By banning an energy system, we remove the competition for appliances and energy delivery techniques. Any free-market economist knows that removing competition increases prices and while we currently live in a free market society, we should not be banning competition or stability.

The NCC, BASIX, and NATHERS already supply more than enough incentives and guidelines on what needs to occur for developments. Adding more complexities and red tape by banning gas, for near unenforceable results, is a waste of resources and rates payers’ money.

I have put a 10-year limit on this motion as technology may have reached a standard where all electric is viable and preferable and is timed with the Community Strategic Plan – Our Wollongong 2035 and the Asset Management Plan 2025-2035 which may include more community batteries. However, that will be and should be up to future Councillors to debate when that knowledge is available.